

Interagency Wildfire Management Team
Meeting Notes
September 25, 2002

Carey Bare (Ecology Group, LANL), Fran Talley (Public Affairs Office, LANL) and others recently drafted a Laboratory News Bulletin item on the comparative effects of drought and recent rains on trees. The News Bulletin submission will be published on October 7.

Steve Mee (Cerro Grande Rehabilitation Project Office, LANL) is burning increasing quantities of trees in an effort to diminish the spread of bark beetle via wood that is released by LANL. An additional burn box has been installed. With this increased capability up to 3100 cubic yards of slash are being burned each week. In addition, the contract for defensible space thinning underneath powerlines has been reopened. All of the Planning Areas are now under contract and thinning projects are currently underway in four Planning Areas.

Jim Whittington (Bandelier National Monument) reported that Monument personnel have been photographing the increased mortality of piñon. Jim also reported that thinning within 100 feet of either side of Highway 4 as it passes through Bandelier National Monument is scheduled to begin as soon as the approval process is complete.

Doug Tucker (Los Alamos County Fire Department) asked about the consequences of piñon mortality on the fuel in canopies of woodlands. There is a concern that the presence of dry needles in the crowns of dead trees will substantially increase the fire hazard.

Patrick McCarthy (Nature Conservancy of Santa Fe) has been developing maps of the fire regimes in the Jemez Mountains as part of the national Fire Learning Network program. The Nature Conservancy has adopted a system of condition classes for use by the Fire Learning Network. Once these classes are mapped for the Jemez Mountains, departures from the ideal can be calculated.

John Stetson (DOE, Los Alamos Area Organization) announced that the Lake Fire burned near the LANL facility at Fenton Lake and the construction of fire breaks around the facility was required. These fire breaks will need to be mitigated.

The next IWMT meeting will be at 9:30 AM on Wednesday, October 9, at TA-21, Building 210 in the Conference Room (142). The IWMT meets every other week and these meetings are open to the public. Contact Randy Balice (balice@lanl.gov, 665-1270) for further information, or to get on the distribution list for these meeting notes.